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'TRON'

DISNEY'S
Electronic Wizardry
Creates
A Dazzling Fantasy



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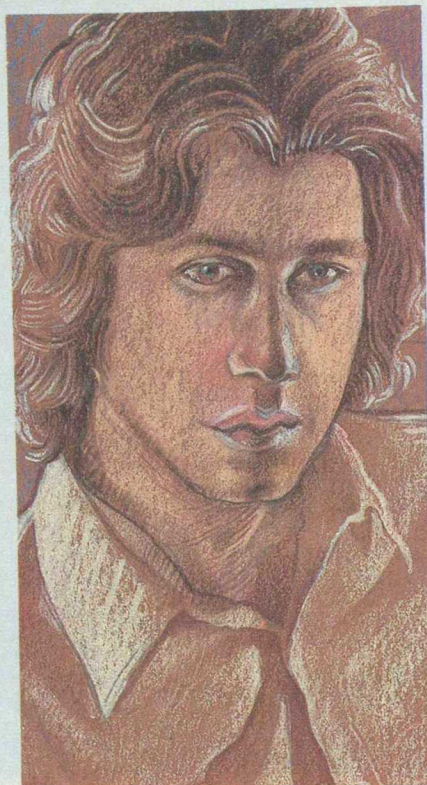
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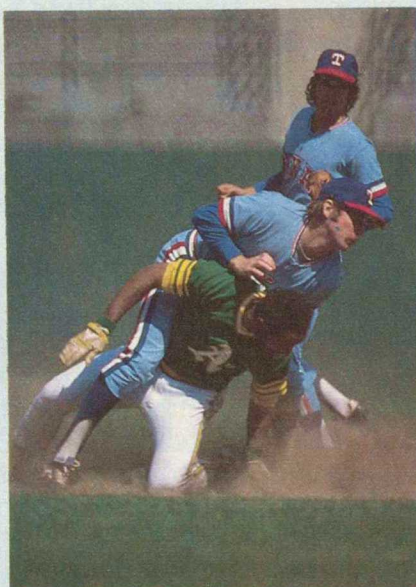
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Oh, take me home to the ball game. Give the World Series a home run.

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ABOUT THE COVER
The 'Star Wars' movies made a virtue of technoflash. Now comes Disney Studios with 'Tron' and a new special-effects twist: computer-generated graphics, the likes of which you've never seen.



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Arcade Alley

A Critical Look at Video Cartridge Games & Programs

by Bill Kunkel & Arnie Katz



Cosmic Swarm, Space Jockey Debut

If all the plans announced so far come to fruition, we're going to be up to our armpits in video games. For instance, there may be as many as 100 new cartridges for the Atari VCS available this year. That would more than triple the size of the game library for that popular system.

Of course, making ambitious plans and carrying them through aren't quite the same thing. Some potential video-game makers will undoubtedly get scared off by the competition or stumble over some other obstacle long before their games reach the public.

But our hunch is that a surprisingly high percentage of the games sneak-previewed over the last year or so will see the light of day. Two companies that promised VCS-compatible cartridges have just delivered their first titles, so let's look at these new entries from CommaVid and U.S. Games.

Cosmic Swarm (CommaVid/Atari VCS) could be called a workmanlike video game. The graphics, though entirely adequate and serviceable, aren't pretty. The sounds suit the game perfectly, but won't blow video-gaming veterans out of their chairs with surprise. So what rescues "Cosmic Swarm" from being just another decent game? Its ingenious play mechanics.

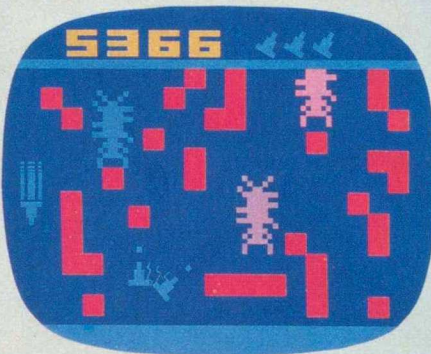
Gamers command "Asteroids"-like spaceships, available one at a time during the course of the game, using a highly original control system. Holding down the action button allows the pilot to rotate the ship in either direction using the stick. Releasing the button fires the craft's front-mounted laser cannon. When the action button is not pressed, the stick governs the spaceship's horizontal and vertical movement on the screen.

The arrival of one or more space termites begins the action. The intergalactic insects carry blocklike nest components with which they attempt to fill the entire playfield. If the ship touches either a space bug or its nest material, the craft is obliterated and replaced by a reserve spaceship. Three rounds constitute a complete

game, though bonus ships may be earned.

The laser cannon can easily zap one of the bugs, but the nest segments pose a more nettlesome problem. They are invulnerable when they are their normal green color, so the player must attempt to hit the nest particle while a termite is actually toting it. This energizes all blocks on the screen, turning them a bright red to signify their new status. While in this state, nest blocks are vulnerable to the ship's laser fire. The nest segments stay red until the player shoots a space termite, something the arcader will be forced to do before very long.

Just to make things a little more difficult, the spaceship must periodically dock to restore depleted energy. A trilling



'Cosmic Swarm': not especially pretty—but, ah, you should see how it plays.

alarm signals the appearance of a docking craft from either edge of the screen. The gamer must then align his craft with the mothership and dock before it exits the playfield. If the player fails to dock or accidentally destroys the mothership, the game immediately ends.

Because the action is non-repetitive, "Cosmic Swarm" is suitable for long gaming sessions. Its biggest challenge is to master the steering and firing, because you must glide through some mighty tight spots on the way to rolling up a big score.

"Cosmic Swarm" is an excellent first effort from CommaVid. Recommended.


With "Defender" sucking up quarters at

a furious pace in the commercial arcades, it was only a matter of time before the first scrolling shootout reached the home market. **Space Jockey** (U.S. Games/Atari VCR) is an outstanding example of the breed.

The Arcader uses the joystick to maneuver an attack saucer which enters the fray on the left side of the screen. A variety of armed and unarmed targets zoom into view from the righthand edge and head toward the saucer. Tanks, jets, prop planes, and helicopters can all fire at the arcader's ship, while lesser-value objects such as balloons, trees, and houses are passive targets that serve mainly as obstacles.

The human pilot begins the game with a complement of three saucers, useable one at a time. Scoring 1000 points earns an extra attack craft. There are 16 game variations, though most players will want to concentrate on the full-featured choices. In game 16, for instance, the enemy ships move randomly, collisions with the targets destroy the saucer, and the player's ship can move horizontally as well as vertically. Another option allows for steerable missiles much in the manner of "Air-Sea Battle."

One design flaw mars an otherwise excellent cartridge. It is possible to tote up 20,000 points or even more by keeping your saucer in the lower lefthand corner of the screen and holding your finger down on the action button to produce rapid fire. Fortunately, this is correctable by putting the righthand difficulty switch in the up position to allow the enemy weapons to fire more often. (It could have been corrected altogether if the saucer disintegrated when it touched the line representing ground terrain.)

This glitch aside, "Space Jockey" is first-rate action from start to finish. The visuals are especially charming. The helicopter blades spin and the balloons float through the air with gravity-defying realism. This fine cartridge gives Atari-VCS owners a chance to sample a kind of play action not previously available with the system. 

track of each employee right on down to the mail room persons. It's called Vortacs.

Employees carry passes the size of a cigarette pack. These emit signals picked up by sensors around the office. Too much time on a coffee break or in the cafeteria will show up on the master computer. It is expected that Vortacs will cut down on such naughty stuff as social interaction.

In addition to surveillance, Vortacs has other uses. It also keeps track of how many people eat in the cafeteria, how many are vegetarians, and handy things like that.

It's already being distributed in Europe, and its British distributor says that though people will initially call it a Big Brother, they'll get used to it just as they got used to surveillance cameras in department stores.

MPAA = KGB²

If your aged father asked that you dub a tape for him, would you do it? Of course not. If you did, he might have you thrown in the clinker.

That's what happened to Don Johnson, owner of a store called Magic Video in Chicago, when he copied a movie tape for Robert Zimmerman, an elderly man for whom Johnson says "I did things just as I would for my father." Zimmerman became friendly with Johnson and talked Johnson into copying a tape, giving him a story about a son who lived in Wisconsin without a nearby video store.

That's when the trouble began. Zimmerman was an undercover agent from the Motion Picture Association of America, those watchdogs of video piracy.

"Federal marshalls came in and just tore the place apart," says Johnson. "All they got was my briefcase with my own tapes in it." Those tapes were all that a bunch of movie companies needed to sue Johnson.

"This is definitely entrapment. That's what my lawyer says," according to Johnson. "And as far as bootlegging goes, Magic Video has always been honest, so honest that I'm losing money. I can't believe

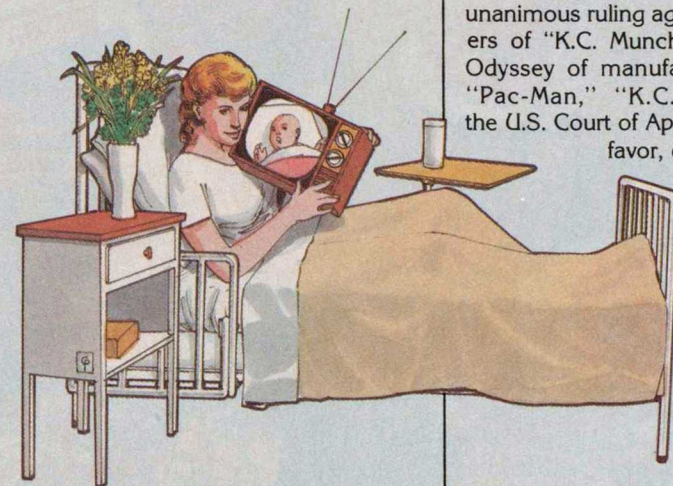
I could go to jail for doing something so innocent. My wife just had a baby, and she's scared. I don't know what we're going to do."



Marcus Welby, VHS

It's the kind of plot you'd have seen on *Marcus Welby M.D.* After a difficult Caesarean delivery at Alta Bates Hospital in Berkeley, California, Elaine Respess was rushed to an intensive-care unit to be treated for postoperative infection. At the same time, her newborn daughter Tori was whisked away for emergency treatment at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Oakland.

"I never got to see her," says the new mom. "I didn't know if she'd make it or if I'd make it. I'd find myself crying at no provocation. I had no idea of what my daughter was like."



Concerned nurses working with mother and daughter requested that a videotape be made of newborn Tori Respess. Tori, Registered Nurse Terry Jones, and Dr. Michael LeNoir were the stars in this drama with Jones and LeNoir announcing on tape to Mrs. Respess that her daughter would be fine, and showing the little bundle of joy to mama. According to Children's Hospital spokeswoman Peggy Green, knowing that her daughter was OK sped Mrs. Respess' recovery and now she and daughter are doing fine.

Video systems are being used in pediatric training programs, according to Green, and moms in hospital beds across the country now are tracking their newborns' progress with closed-circuit TVs connected to the nursery.

Is Pac-Man a Bad Man?

In the midst of the battle over whether video games are healthy amusements or menaces to the younger generation come a few words from Sherry Turkle, professor of sociology at MIT.

Turkle has done a study on the psychological effects of the electronic marvels. The gist of her findings are: "Interactiveness used to be the criteria by which we decided if something was or was not alive." The age of the computer has changed all that, she says, and the danger comes when kids find relationships with the machines more rewarding than their relationships with other human beings.



Hard proof that video games are harmless.

In other words, have you taken a "Pac-Man" home to meet the family?

Speaking of "Pac-Man," Atari has won a unanimous ruling against Odyssey, makers of "K.C. Munchkin." Atari accused Odyssey of manufacturing a ripoff of "Pac-Man," "K.C. Munchkin," and the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled in Atari's favor, expanding copyright protection of video games. Get ready for other imitators to bite the dust in court.

Vidbits

In Texas, a judge is taking courtroom taping a step further than electronic newsgathering and having juries rule on videotaped trials. Judge John Marshall of Dallas had a jury watch three hours of television to decide on a woman's workman's compensation claim, after deciding that a videotaped trial would be easier and cheaper for everyone.

McDonald's could be the first fast-food chain to make video games part of the work force. McDonald's has approached Atari about designing a video game that would take the customer's order and help him while away the waiting time with a game.

Researchers are blaming television for a strong bias against old people, which they say affects children as young as three years old. A Colorado state study shows that preschoolers already describe old people as poor, ugly, dirty, and sick, and the prejudice is strongest among middle-class white children whose opinions have been formed by television rather than direct contact with elderly people.

IBM researchers are developing the latest in dictating machines. Within five years, they say, all you'll have to do is talk into the machine and see your words printed on the video screen. At the flick of another button, you could also commit the memo to paper.



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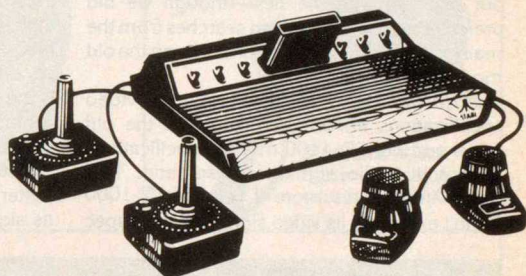
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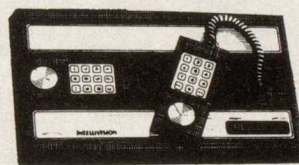
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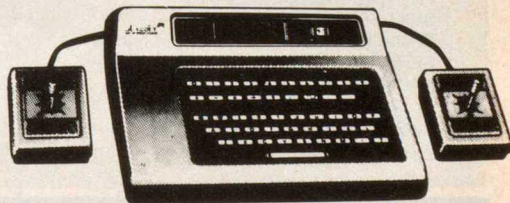


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